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March 9, 2010

SC Public Service Commission
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100
Columbia, SC 29210

RE: Docket 2009-489-E

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the rate hike requested by SCE&G.

I read with interest the article published in The State newspaper today in which I found two blatant falsehoods presented by SCE&G. The first is that they are freely offering assistance to those having difficulty paying their high electric bills. I have made payment arrangements in the past with SCE&G and noted their message on my bill that it was possible to do so again. When I called to request a payment plan, however, the agent acted as though there was no such plan available and could offer me no real alternative to paying the full amount by the cut-off date.

The second falsehood in the article is quote: "The current jump in heating bills reflects 'lower temperatures, not higher rates,' SCE&G spokesman Eric Boomhower said." Because of the economic downturn and lower income, my family has been actively seeking to lower our electricity consumption for the past year. There has been more than one occasion, as documented by SCE&G themselves on my electric bill, that our monthly consumption over the same period last year has DECREASED, but the amount due has INCREASED. It has been an exceptionally cold winter, but SCE&G is also CHARGING MORE for the electricity used than a year ago. For them to say otherwise is a lie.....I'm sure they consider it disinformation....but a lie nonetheless.

I understand the rates they are currently charging were previously approved. But, the current economy is a perfect storm of financial disaster. Let them take less profit ... like the rest of us. These high bills represent real hardship for many people. My two previous bills were for nearly \$600 and \$500 respectively....this with a family income of less than half what it used to be AND WITH THE THERMOSTAT SET AT NO HIGHER THAN 68 DEGREES!

I also question why we are paying for reactors that have not yet been approved. This is a big corporation boondoggle. Again, every financial and private sector is suffering losses at this time. SCE&G can take their hit with the rest of us. Now is not the appropriate time to increase the burden on consumers.

I ask again that NO FURTHER RATE HIKES BE APPROVED FOR SCE&G until they can HONESTLY respond to the needs of consumers and the economy has stabilized.

Sincerely,

Marsha T. Ardila

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